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ABSTRACT

This booklet is a collection of five articles from the Child Development Associate Program (CDA) in Texas, part of a nationwide program for training child care workers. "Skills Needed by a CDA Training Counselor" outlines three skills: facilitation of learning, interpersonal skills, and management. "Some Findings and Recommendations from the Texas CDA Projects" discusses aspects of administration and training, including program goals, staffing, coordination, recruitment and selection of trainees, design of training, and field sites. "Field Site Supervision" lists methods and goals for field site supervisors. "Resource Rooms" offers suggestions on how to set up and use a central room for staff and trainees. The largest part of the document, "An Excerpt from The CDA Program: The Child Development Associate - A Guide for Training", published by U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, is taken from a guidebook designed for use in training staff for Head Start, day care, nursery schools and other preschool programs. (SB)

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CDA
Child Development
Associate Training
in Texas

A Handful of Ideas

Another Project of the
Texas Department of Community Affairs
Early Childhood Development Division
P.O. Box 13166 Capitol Station
Austin, Texas 78711

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What is CDA?

A CDA, or Child Development Associate, is a person who has been trained and judged competent to care for children 3-5 years old. CDA training consists half of academic course work and half of actually working with preschool children in a child care center. The CDA credential is awarded after a thorough assessment by the National CDA Consortium, Washington, D. C. Originating in 1971 with the federal Office of Child Development, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, CDA is a nationwide effort to provide qualified, highly motivated personnel to meet a growing demand by parents for more and better child care.

Why This Book?

Seven CDA training sites were started in Texas in 1973 with state funds from the Early Childhood Development Division of the Texas Department of Community Affairs. In the course of developing a curriculum for training CDA candidates, the Texas sites collected existing informational materials on competency-based education, shared new experiences in dealing with problems, and began to record their own discoveries and successes. Reprinted here are a few of those materials and writings. The hope is that this "handful of ideas" will help others establish first-rate CDA training programs and contribute to enriching the lives of young children.

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Skills Needed by a CDA Training Counselor

The Child Development Associate Program in Texas has combined the functions of the traditional instructor and field supervisor into one position known as the Training Counselor. In order to implement the program efficiently and effectively, the Training Counselor needs unique skills in the three areas of 1) Facilitation of Learning, 2) Interpersonal Skills and 3) Management.

Competency statements for the Training Counselor in these three skills were developed as the result of a research project for an advanced degree by Peg Carter at Texas Woman's University. The directors, training counselors, and field supervisors who had been involved in the Texas CDA pilot projects (1973-75) served as the validating team for the competency statements included in the revised version listed below.

I. FACILITATION OF LEARNING

The CDA Training Counselor can:

- o Establish entry level for each trainee,
- o Establish a systematic personalized educational plan with each trainee,
- o Implement individual and corporate educational plans with trainees,
- o Utilize evaluative procedures which facilitate the achievement of stated objectives,
- o Demonstrate knowledge of and ability to implement procedures and techniques of supervision,
- o Model effective teacher behavior.

II. INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

The CDA Training Counselor can:

- o Exhibit genuineness and self-knowledge in relationships with others,
- o Establish and maintain personal relationships on an individual basis to meet the goals of CDA training,

- o Exhibit effective group dynamic skills in working with trainees and others involved in a group situation.

III. MANAGEMENT

The CDA Training Counselor can:

- o Develop a personalized program for each trainee in the CDA program,
- o Establish an on-going working/learning contract with each field site,
- o Maintain a Learning Resource Center,
- o Establish and maintain management procedures which facilitate effective program operation,
- o Demonstrate effective management of personal resources.

These 14 competency statements represent an attempt to expand the concept of competency-based education as it relates to trainees in the CDA Program to include the Training Counselors who implement the program. To further define the skills needed by the Training Counselor, each competency statement will be followed by a list of indicators for demonstration of competency. The competencies and indicators are:

I. FACILITATION OF LEARNING

The CDA Training Counselor can:

A. Establish entry level for each trainee.

Indicators:

1. Assesses trainee's ability to work with young children in areas of skill, knowledge and attitude.
2. Encourages trainee to conduct self-assessment of strengths and weaknesses in relation to the CDA competencies and personal capacities.
3. Enables trainee to describe personal philosophy, goals, educational plan and attitudes toward children.
4. Accepts where trainee is in development and offers alternative ways for learning.

B. Establish a systematic personalized educational plan with each trainee.

Indicators:

1. Utilizes cooperative planning procedures that involve trainee in the formulation and implementation of personal learning goals.
2. Specifies goals and objectives related to individual assessed needs.

3. Develops a design for effective, efficient action in implementing the educational plans.

4. Specifies the resources needed for operating the plan.

5. Exhibits a knowledge of materials and resources at different levels, so trainee can be guided to appropriate resources at an individual level.

6. Designs a support system to reinforce and/or sustain change that has occurred or will occur.

C. Implement individual and corporate educational plans of trainees.

Indicators:

1. Creates an environment in which trainees have the opportunity to demonstrate competency.

2. Verbalizes relationship between what is happening in the classroom and child development principles.

3. Allows trainee to experiment with new ideas, even though they may not be familiar or consistent with approach used by the Training Counselor.

4. Creates an environment in which the trainee has the "freedom to fail"--to learn from each experience whether or not it was "successful".

5. Is creative in using resources (human and multi-media) relevant to competencies being developed.

6. Designs and conducts training sessions to meet specific needs.

7. Assists trainee in putting together various aspects of training (theory, field experience, feelings) in order that a meaningful whole is achieved.

8. Analyzes educational climate in each trainee's situation and adjusts program as indicated.

D. Utilize evaluative procedures which facilitate the achievement of stated objectives.

Indicators:

1. Establishes evaluative criteria consistent with prestated objectives.

2. Provides for the trainee's continued self-assessment of achievement based upon objectives.

3. Engages in cooperative evaluation of achievement with trainee.

4. Considers cumulative data on trainee's ability and achievement in evaluating performance.

5. Evaluates trainee's work qualities, personal traits and progress on the job.

6. Evaluates quality of field-site training received by the trainee.

7. Discusses the functioning of the teaching team with the team members, whereby appropriate action can be taken if necessary.

E. Demonstrate knowledge of and ability to implement procedures and techniques of supervision.

Indicators:

1. Respects and supports the trainee as a person at all times.

2. Instructs trainees in using an observation system to insure that the vocabulary and intent of observation can be understood.

3. Decides on specific behaviors that need to be altered and specific learning activities to attain the desired behaviors in conjunction with the trainee.

4. Spends time in the classroom to get a "feel" for children, trainee, and setting before focusing on observation of trainee.

5. Establishes a time for feedback conferences during each field-site visit which is convenient for trainee, center staff, and trainer.

6. Provides opportunity for trainee to evaluate own performance before making suggestions.

F. Model effective teacher behavior.

Indicators:

1. Demonstrates a healthy self-concept.

2. Supports the person and is objective about the skills demonstrated.

3. Accepts and values each person as an individual.

4. Focuses on potentialities of each trainee.

5. Demonstrates question-asking skills that stimulate, direct, and extend thinking.

6. Demonstrates knowledge of different learning modalities and adapts program to meet styles of trainees.

7. Encourages divergent and convergent thinking.

II. INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

The CDA Training Counselor can:

A. Exhibit genuineness and self-knowledge in relationships with others.

Indicators:

1. Models a healthy self-concept--accepting own strengths and weaknesses and managing both appropriately.

2. Communicates congruently own thoughts, feelings, attitudes, values and commitments.

3. Identifies cultural bias and analyzes ways in which it affects an individual's relationship with trainees of a different cultural background.

4. Accepts negative feedback nondefensively.

5. Maintains continuous personal and professional growth.

B. Establish and maintain personal relationships on an individual basis to meet the goals of CDA training.

Indicators:

1. Physically attends to trainee to communicate an attitude of listening and interest (i.e., eye contact and relaxed posture).

2. Recognizes and identifies the physical cues to feelings that are expressed by others.

3. Responds to trainees with accepting statements to communicate that both content and feelings have been heard and accepted.

4. Communicates a positive regard for the trainee's abilities to operate effectively at all intellectual levels; in handling feelings; and in solving problems.

5. Uses praise and descriptive feedback effectively.

6. Maintains confidentiality of privileged information.

7. Uses problem solving methods that enable trainee to solve own problems.

8. Exhibits skill in handling conflict situations (i.e., respecting other person's right to disagree, finding areas of agreement, and negotiating differences).

9. Implements strategies which produce a two-way information exchange with school personnel.

C. Exhibit effective group dynamic skills in working with trainees and others involved in a group situation.

Indicators:

1. Establishes a climate of trust so that each person participates in discussion and contributes own ideas.

2. Balances task-oriented activities with group maintenance as necessary to accomplish goals.

3. Accepts and clarifies, in a nonthreatening manner, an attitude or feeling tone expressed by another.

4. Clarifies, builds, and develops ideas suggested by others.

5. Allows time for and encourages trainees to check perceptions and personal meanings of learning activities whereby learning may be more fully integrated.

6. Recognizes that conflict can lead to beneficial change and manages it toward positive resolution.

III. MANAGEMENT

The CDA Training Counselor can:

A. Develop a personalized program for each trainee in the CDA program.

Indicators:

1. Determines the needs, problems, potentialities and interests of each trainee (using several methods of data collecting).

2. Establishes clear contract with each trainee so that expectations and responsibilities of both trainee and trainer are understood.

3. Identifies common training needs and plans to meet those needs.

4. Matches trainee's unique characteristics with an appropriate field site.

5. Is flexible in adjusting time demands of class participation and field supervision to meet needs of trainee.

6. Maintains records documenting each trainee's progress through the program.

B. Establish an on-going working/learning contract with each field site.

Indicators:

1. Orients field-site staff to CDA training.

2. Clearly defines the commitments of trainee, field-site staff and CDA program staff to each other.

3. Develops a systematic training plan with the trainee and field-site director.

4. Provides field-site staff with reinforcers for cooperation in training.

5. Provides continuing support to trainee, field-site supervisors and directors.

C. Maintain a Learning Resource Center.

Indicators:

1. Establishes procedures for maximum use of the Learning Resource Center by trainees, other school personnel and outside groups.

2. Plans to meet changing needs of supplies and equipment for instructional goals.

D. Establish and maintain management procedures which facilitate effective program operation.

Indicators:

1. Involves those persons who will implement the results of a decision in the decision-making process.

2. Organizes and coordinates program personnel in order to make maximum use of personnel, time, materials, space and money.

3. Meets regularly with program personnel to review progress toward achievement of the goals and objectives established by them for the CDA program.

4. Relates the basic functions of management--planning, organizing, delegating, motivating, evaluating--to the CDA program.

E. Demonstrate effective management of personal resources.

Indicators:

1. Prioritizes program elements whereby tasks will be accomplished on time with a minimum amount of stress.

2. Uses the most efficient method for clear communication.

3. Establishes clear contracts with each trainee to insure that program responsibility is shared.

4. Recognizes personal strengths and limitations and utilizes other resources when needed.

5. Takes care of physical needs to insure that health is maintained.

6. Provides for emotional needs by sharing with a support group or an individual.

7. Meets mental needs by continuing professional development.

Peg Carter
Texas Woman's University
August 1976

Some Findings and Recommendations from the Texas CDA Projects

When this paper was written, the Texas Department of Community Affairs, Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD) was two and one-half years into funding five Child Development Associate (CDA) training projects at seven colleges and universities in Texas. Although these projects were all based on the national CDA guidelines, there were certain differences. The Texas projects' curricula were distinguished by their emphases on 1) developing the social and emotional skills of the trainee and 2) relating their curricula to the needs of the project's community or communities. Administratively the Texas projects were characterized by a high degree of interaction with one another. The projects were in frequent contact with each other and with OECD leadership in defining problems, suggesting solutions and obtaining technical assistance. Consequently, there was much sharing and mutual assistance among the projects concerning the problems which the projects themselves thought to be significant. This sharing of ideas, problems and solutions significantly facilitated program progress.

The concerns and issues noted in the following pages have many sources. Some are at least partly a result of: 1) the sheer newness of the CDA concept, 2) the consequences of time-limited funding, and 3) the circumstances of location in a particular educational institution. However, it is expected that sharing some of what the Texas CDA training projects have learned from each other will facilitate the development of other training projects. The problems and successes encountered by the Texas projects are discussed in the following pages with this objective in mind.

Administrative Concerns

Administration is a key element in the development of any training project. This is particularly true of an innovative program such as CDA training where few guidelines or standard procedures exist and any new program faces resistance to change.

Goals

The goals of a program are the long term outcomes desired for that project. They are not immediately realizable but give focus and shape to the activities of a program. All Texas CDA programs set explicit goals for the trainees in their projects; however, not all projects set goals for the training programs themselves. Program administrators must begin thinking very early in program development about their training project's future. Whether this is as a part of a university based preservice program, or as part of a university or non-university based Continuing Education or an Outreach Program is not important. The key here is that goals for the future of the CDA project must be set early in the training project's lifetime so that it is possible for the project to stabilize successfully and continue progressing after initial development.

Staffing

The Texas CDA training projects generally agreed that the quality and skills of their staffs were the most important keys to a successful training program.

Recruitment and Selection: No project wrote specific criteria for staff positions; however, when asked, nearly all project directors mentioned minimum requirements of a master's degree in early childhood education or child development, experience in teaching preschool children and, most importantly, a strong personal commitment to CDA training (i.e. competency-based, individualized and field oriented).

Job Definition: A wide variety of job titles are listed for personnel of the various Texas projects such as field directors, training counselors, or field supervisors. However, the functional tasks of curriculum development, field supervision and the coordination of field and academic experiences occupy most of the staff members' time. Nearly all the project directors agree that the most important specific skill for a staff member to have is the ability for him or her to have good relations with the trainees. Other talents frequently noted are the abilities to write and revise curriculum materials and skills in working with field site personnel, university administrators and faculty members.

Training: The development of a genuinely competency based program coordinated with field experiences requires a wide range of personal and professional skills from the staff. These skills range from curriculum development to trainee assessment to program design and implementation. In many cases the staff members initially lacked the necessary skills and either had to obtain direct consultative assistance or be trained to do the job themselves.

Direct training for CDA staffs is obtained from several sources. Some of the projects enroll staff members in courses at that institution while other projects hire consultants to train the staff. OECD supported the training of staff members through several workshops. These workshops have been particularly effective because they dealt with problem areas for which the CDA projects themselves requested training. It is recommended that whenever possible, CDA programs should coordinate their training efforts among projects having similar concerns and/or interests. This has the dual advantage of: 1) making more resources available for a wider variety of training and, 2) facilitating the sharing of information and ideas among the CDA projects.

Staff concerns: Probably the major problem for the Texas CDA projects during their initial year was the matter of staff workloads. Extremely heavy staff workloads were the rule in the CDA projects for several reasons. Probably the most significant reason was that during the first year of funding the Texas projects attempted to develop curriculum and train trainees at the same time. However, these heavy workloads are probably characteristic of the start-up of any innovative program and should be anticipated in planning first year activities.

Another difficulty is that in some CDA projects the original proposal writers or program designers are no longer directly involved in the training projects. There are two major reasons for this situation: 1) most of the program designers hold senior faculty or administrative positions in their university which require considerable time and 2) high level positions are often not funded or only partially funded so that any extensive participation by these people is a voluntary contribution by them. Over time this unpaid assistance tends to recede as these persons get involved in other university activities.

This results in several problems: 1) the program as originally designed may be inconsistent with the staff members' preferred ways of doing things, 2) the proposal writers are highly skilled professionals; when these persons' talents are unavailable, demands on staff time become even heavier; 3) when representing the program either within the project or university or outside it, few of the staff members have the academic credentials and personal credibility of the original program designers. It is highly recommended that paid positions be provided for senior personnel so that a significant portion of their time can be devoted to CDA training. This is particularly important during the first year when the tasks of designing and implementing the curriculum and administering the program are so complex and demanding.

The CDA staffs are also affected by the slow development of

the assessment and credentialing system. This is particularly disadvantageous because they are designing and carrying out training programs with no information about how the results of their efforts will be evaluated and little information about how the trainees will be credentialed. It is essential for all who have established CDA training programs to find out as soon as possible about the national assessment and credentialing system so that they can be guided in their training efforts and able to inform their trainees about it.

Coordination

Coordination of the Texas CDA training projects particularly emphasizes the relations of departments within universities because the original guidelines for submitted proposals required the cooperation of different departments and colleges in the university. All CDA training projects planned for considerable cooperation among departments and apparently received this support in the early stages of the projects. It is recommended that as early as possible, administrative agreements, particularly those reflecting inter-departmental or inter-collegial procedures be documented as formally as possible to prevent later misunderstandings. As time passes there is a tendency for the unpaid (see above discussion of senior faculty and administrator involvement) departmental representatives to get involved in other activities and lessen their participation in routine program affairs. This results in programs becoming steadily more strongly associated with the department or college which administers and houses them.

. Concerns: A departmental association is perhaps inevitable in a university setting with its differentiation into colleges and departments. However, this categorization does create certain administrative problems for an interdisciplinary curriculum.

For instance, in programs that are moving into completely competency-based individualized training, college faculty members provide academic instruction to the CDA trainees. It is often very difficult to coordinate what these faculty members will provide the CDA, since university academic traditions emphasize the independence of the university professor. However, it is especially difficult to obtain coordinated instruction when the instructor is not even in the same college as the CDA program. The instructor is not hired directly by the CDA program, but rather the university acts as intermediary; hiring the instructor or committing a portion of an existing employee's time, and receiving in return the CDA monies. This results in CDA projects having rather tenuous lines of formal authority over CDA instruction, although informal authority as a result of personal friendships and professional agreement is more often the rule. One Texas project deals with this problem by directly training the CDA in-

structors concerning CDA concepts and the project's expectations of the instructors.

An analogous example in a fully competency based program concerns testing for academic credit for a trainee which is an important aspect of many competency-based education approaches. However, many departments and colleges are quite skeptical of testing programs operated out of another department or college which could award credit in their field. This is true even if they had participated in developing some of the modules or identifying performance standards, etc. They lack control over a system which could divert potential students from their program. This concern over lack of control can be interpreted to mean concern over quality of training, or it can be seen as a concern over the loss of revenue from fewer students in the departmental program.

In both the illustrations above, the central problem is the effort to establish a centralized, closely organized training program in a setting in which collegial, departmental and individual autonomy are emphasized.

Another factor which affects on-campus coordination of CDA is resistance to competency-based education (CBE). For instance, teacher educators fear that they must give up their autonomy as professors, or that an alien value system will be imposed on them by the competency-based program. Administrators are concerned about changes in administrative details which result in unsettling questions such as "what is a course in a CBE system?" "How is student progress monitored?" or "How are academic credits earned?". A related administrative problem has to do with determining costs of CBE--how much investment in technology is needed, how do they determine faculty workloads, and how much effort must go into developing a CBE curriculum or setting up a resource room.

Although the different CDA programs found various solutions to these and other problems, certain worthwhile ideas are in general use: 1) involving administrators and other key personnel in the design and development of the CDA training program itself since many of the significant problems are administrative in nature, 2) developing a competency system which has been carefully adapted to the unique needs of that institution in terms of its objectives, population served, and resources, and 3) those programs where good communication has been maintained and resistance is minimal are projects that are headed by a person who has strong academic credentials and some personal power in the institution.

Recruitment and Selection of Trainees

Recruiting Strategies: When the CDA projects were getting started, probably the most frequent recruiting strategy used by the Texas projects was direct, personal contact with the various public and private child care facilities in the area. This was

supplemented in some projects by letters to the various centers requesting applications to CDA training. These dissemination strategies were then followed up by large group meetings where more specific information was presented and questions could be answered. Radio, television, and newspapers were not used frequently for recruitment.

As the programs have matured and enrollments have stabilized, no program has maintained a formal recruitment effort. Instead, projects attract applicants as a result of public presentations by CDA staff and/or personal contact with CDA trainees. This latter factor, contact with trainees, is particularly powerful. For instance, at one project, all applicants for CDA training since approximately the summer of 1973 applied because of their personal contacts with CDA trainees. It is clear that after the first year of a project the problem is not recruiting trainees but rather selecting good ones.

Selection Criteria: No program specifies clear criteria for trainee selection; however, certain minimum criteria pertain to all projects: 1) academic background - all projects select persons who have at least a high school diploma or GED, 2) work experience - all persons selected are currently working at child care centers or had been employed at such centers, 3) attitudinal factors - usually indications of "high" interest and motivation. This is the fuzziest area, and also in the estimation of many project staff, the most important. This lact of explicit criteria can cause problems in training later. For instance, several trainees at one program were admitted who lacked the necessary minimum prerequisites for CDA training at that project. Conversely, at another program one CDA turned out to be considerably over qualified for the training and could not adjust to the program.

There is no easy answer to this dilemma of initial level or competence, which must be considered by all training projects. With experience the selection criteria will become more valid. Probably the key here is that the assessment system, particularly the preassessment component, should be related to the selection methods used by the training project. This has two implications: 1) the assessment framework within the curriculum should provide guidance for selecting students, and 2) care should be taken to ensure a satisfactory "match" between the skills of selected students and the curricular demands of instruction and assessment.

Few incentives are given the prospective trainees except for free tuition and the opportunity for academic credit; in addition, one project offers free books, another offers free materials, while a third offers some child care. It should be noted that persons at certain projects question whether these incentives are beneficial to the training effort. Indeed, one program plans to charge half-tuition to CDA trainees in projects funded by the Texas Migrant Council and Texas Department of Public Welfare because they believe

this commitment from the trainee increases his motivation to benefit from the CDA training.

Trainees

The largest single group of applicants for training (about one third of the total of 450 during the first one and one-half years) came from day care centers. Significant numbers also came from Head Start teachers, public school aides and private school aides. Day care staff were also the largest group selected for training, constituting over two thirds of the total group selected. Considerable numbers of persons from Head Start, public schools and private nurseries and kindergarten also were selected.

More than any other single factor, the self confidence of the trainees is seen as their greatest weakness and paradoxically as their greatest source of strength. It is viewed as a weakness because so many of the trainees initially lacked confidence in their teaching skills and were self-deprecating and defensive. However, personnel at the field sites and also project staff members have remarked on how much the CDA training has done for the development of self-confidence in the trainees. This is partially a consequence of the built-in autonomy and self reward of competency-based education, but it also appears to be more than just that. This should be studied further as a major unanticipated result of CDA training.

Design of Training

A major characteristic of the Texas CDA projects is their emphasis on competency-based training with its requirements for specificity in CDA skills, knowledges and attitudes. Because of the resulting changes to traditional educational strategies, considerable staff time during the first months of program activity was spent in designing training.

Collecting Job Data: Normally, a prerequisite step for designing training is the collection of job information from workers in the field. However, since there are no persons presently employed as CDAs, alternate strategies must be used in an effort to "reality test" the CDA concept.

A strategy frequently used by the CDA projects is to interview employers of child care workers about what their workers do and what they feel constitutes a "good" worker. The major problems here are: 1) the small number of employers interviewed; 2) possibly biased selection of interviewers, since the employers were usually acquaintances of CDA staff members; and 3) the lack of definition

of what a CDA should be able to do, etc. Another similar strategy used by some projects is to ask "experts" what a competent child care worker can do, etc. However, the problems noted above are also relevant to this approach. Nevertheless both of these approaches are useful tools for establishing preliminary linkages between CDA training and practice.

Breadth of Curriculum Coverage: Coverage of the CDA projects is quite broad with very little subject matter relevant to early childhood education left untouched. All Texas projects cover language and concept development; affective development; psychomotor development; safety; family relations; and culture, age and socioeconomic status factors. Using community resources and CDA professional roles are dealt with in some curricula but not all. Perhaps the only early childhood education topics not dealt with extensively are subjects, such as infant (0-2) development or early childhood education for the handicapped, which are not directly part of the present CDA role.

The sheer range of coverage presents certain problems in itself. For example, at what level of proficiency do we expect CDAs to be? Several of the curricula appear to have sufficient objectives and activities for a four-year college program. If we require these projects to be two-year programs, can we trim some of this breadth of scope? If so, what areas should be trimmed?

Sequencing Course Module Content: There are two basic problems associated with Sequencing Course Module Content depending on whether the CDA project employs university faculty for instructional purposes.

Those projects which are using only instructional modules can arrange their training in various sequences depending on the needs of the trainees. For instance, one project reports that only two of their competency areas have prerequisite competencies. The problem for these projects (and a problem for the instructor-based programs also) is the general lack of formal preassessment for most of the modules. Without a preassessment of the trainees' skills, only a very rough estimate can be made of where the trainee is and what sequence of modules would be appropriate for her. Those projects using instructors have an additional problem in sequencing instruction. All instructor-based academic programs, with the exception of a project where the CDA staff itself does the instruction, report that they had difficulty scheduling faculty instructors and obtaining appropriate faculty.

It is recommended that developing training programs give early emphasis to the design of appropriate preassessments, because this is a key aspect of CBE programs. However, trainers should point out to the trainee the tentative, experimental nature of any assessment procedure during the early stages of curriculum development.

Field Sites

Supervised field experiences were seen by the CDA projects to be crucial for helping trainees acquire the CDA competencies; furthermore, national CDA guidelines required "that 50 percent of the trainees' total time should be spent in supervised field work in early childhood settings."

Field supervision is a major cost in CDA program operation. Probably over 50 percent of the program staff (non-instructional) personnel's time is spent in this activity, chiefly as a result of the large number of centers in which CDAs are located and the wide geographic spread of these centers.

Selection of Centers: In most cases, field sites are not selected. Instead, trainees are selected who are employed at various centers which are then contacted to see if they will participate in the CDA program. The critical factor for all CDA projects is the agreement of the field sites to work cooperatively with the training projects. Additional criteria frequently used are: 1) willingness to let the teacher try new materials or teaching techniques, 2) readiness to let the field supervisor from the training project come in and observe the classroom, and 3) the apparent quality of the site.

In nearly all situations, formal agreements are written which establish regular release time of 4-8 hours per week of academic training for CDA trainees. In addition, the agreements require the field site to continue to meet the criteria for selection noted above, while the trainers will provide training to the CDAs or occasionally to non-CDA staff. In all but one training project, this is the only direct pay-off for the field site. One CDA project pays the field sites $200 per semester.

Both staff and trainees frequently complain about the quality of sites available for training. There simply are not enough exemplary field sites. One project attempted to deal with this by working with the staff at substandard sites to improve the total program at those sites. However, the magnitude of the tasks involved and the difficulty of obtaining consistent cooperation from site directors made the attempt unfeasible. All projects work at creating good relations with site administrators and unobtrusively assist in site development. Other possible strategies include (a) continued efforts by project staff to identify and recruit quality sites, (b) increased benefits to field sites in terms of pay-offs other than just provision of training to CDAs and (c) greater utilization of laboratory nurseries at institutions or development of own nursery resources.

Coordination of Academic and Field Work: All projects empha-

size the close relationship between academic knowledges or skills and field work. This close coordination is usually obtained in two ways: 1) structurally, through including field performance objectives within the modules or requiring field based learning activities as a part of academic courses, and (2) through personal counseling with the trainee. It should be noted that learning occurs in both directions. The training supervision helps the trainee apply academic skills and knowledges to the field sites, while the trainee enriches his academic program with ideas and insights from his field site experiences.

Concerns: The workload of the training supervisor is a persistent problem because there are typically a large number of widely spread field sites. Consequently, a considerable amount of time is spent merely getting from one site to another. At least two of the projects try to lessen this problem by video taping trainees at the field sites. The field supervisor and the trainee then critique the lesson together at the training center. However, in all programs, it is quite difficult to satisfactorily balance proper field supervision with other staff duties.

The lack of teaching models at the sites is also a problem. In a few cases, a supervising teacher or director provide this assistance to the trainees, but only infrequently. Furthermore, the sheer workload of the teaching supervisors permit only occasional opportunities for modeling or demonstration teaching from the CDA trainers.

Also it is difficult for the trainee to obtain experience with 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds, to teach children having various handicapping conditions, and to work with parents and children of a variety of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, because it is unlikely that all these conditions are represented at the field sites. Consequently, although the depth of field experience is considerable for all trainees, there is a real possibility that the range of experience may be insufficiently broad. These problems are leading some training projects to select CDAs who are <u>not</u> presently working in a child care center. This allows much greater flexibility of field placement and also facilitates coordination of field and academic experiences. It also permits consideration of a much wider range of potential trainees.

CDA Project Relations with Non-CDA Field Site Staff: Nearly all programs report CDA trainee involvement in in-service training at their field sites which is a direct result of the trainees' CDA experiences. Generally, other field site staff think well of the CDA program and welcome the ideas brought into the center by the trainees. This allows much greater flexibility of field placement and facilitates coordination of field and academic experiences. It also permits consideration of a much wider range of potential trainees.

Three relatively minor problems which do crop up occasionally are: 1) non-CDA staff members' jealousy of what they perceive to be special privileges and opportunities for CDA trainees, 2) fear on the part of staff (including administrators) that they will be negatively evaluated by outsiders, and 3) concern by center management that their authority over center employees will be diminished. CDA trainees and trainers have been generally successful at reducing their apprehensions primarily through personal example, and by direct discussion when necessary.

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July 1975

Field Site Supervision

The process of field supervision should focus on the trainee's role in the classroom and promote an in-depthunderstanding of the complexities of that role. Continuing on-the-job supervision should be the primary strategy for enhancing the trainee's level of competency. A team approach - - in which the trainee, the CDA Trainer, and the staff of the child care agency all participate - - is likely to be most successful. Such an approach can provide opportunities for immediate feedback, demonstration teaching, non-self-conscious observation, and individualized training.

The CDA Trainer's role should be one of an instructor, advisor, and facilitator rather than a visiting "authority figure" who observes, comments, and then leaves without a continuing commitment to improving the situation. The Trainer should have ample time at the field placement to become familiar with all aspects of the program and to develop a trusting relationship with the trainee and staff. A good ratio of Trainer to trainees is 1 to 10, or 1 to 12.

The CDA Trainer should sensitively and carefully observe and evaluate the trainee's work with children and regularly provide him or her with useful feedback and supportive help in improving competency. In addition the Trainer should:

1. Coordinate all aspects of training experiences.

2. Provide on-site training support to the trainee to help integrate the trainee's work experience and academic experiences.

3. Plan formal and informal experiences which contribute to the trainee's total learning.

4. Provide counseling, both professional and personal, according to individual trainees' needs.

Suggested Methods for Helping Trainees Acquire the CDA Competencies

The following methods are useful to highlight good models of teaching and help trainees acquire the CDA competencies:

1. Demonstrations by the CDA staff or others, followed by group discussion.

2. On-the-job discussions with other staff and CDA Trainer.

3. Use of audio-visual materials with prepared discussion guides that highlight examples of CDA competencies.

4. Self-analysis, guided by evaluation sheets or criteria supplied by CDA training staff.

5. Use of video tape recorders or audio tape recorders to tape teaching for self-analysis or peer evaluation.

6. Paired peer observations and evaluation where two trainees work together to learn competencies.

7. Personal journals and diaries.

8. Child study: observing specific behaviors or doing case studies. (In all cases confidentiality of the children's records should be preserved.)

9. Individual conferences with CDA Trainer, followed by feedback and goal setting related to development of the CDA competencies.

10. Discussion groups or seminars in which "What happened this morning" is related to the CDA competencies, to theoretical knowledge of child growth and development, and to principles of curriculum and instruction.

11. On-site workshops focused on curriculum, teaching methods, parent involvement and other subjects related to CDA competency areas.

12. Field visits to experimental programs, community agencies, and child care programs with different philosophies or physical set-ups.

13. Exchange placements with other CDA trainees.

14. Independent projects.

Supervised Field Work

Approximately 50 percent or more of the trainee's total training time must be spent in supervised field work.

Supervised field work is crucial to the development of competency. For classroom staff, the trainee's major field "placement" will undoubtedly be the day care center in which he or she is employed. However, this does not mean that "training" will consist of routine work in the trainee's own classroom. The 50 percent of the trainee's total time which is "supervised" should involve:

1. Being observed by a supervisor followed by an individual conference or informal conversation.

2. Being video taped, or audio taped - or doing this oneself, followed by conversation or self-evaluation.

3. Observing peers, or being observed.

4. Attending "integrative seminars" in which teacher behaviors are related to theoretical knowledge in terms of "What I saw this morning. . . . ."

5. Watching teaching demonstrations.

6. Visiting other preschool programs or child development centers.

7. Attending on-site workshops focused on curriculum areas or teaching methods with immediate application.

The role of the CDA Trainer is to guide the field experience so that it is a dynamic learning experience. The supervision process should focus on the individual trainee's role in the classroom as a teacher of young children.

Editor's Note: Since this article was written, the CDA Trainer as Field Supervisor has received additional attention. Because supervised field work is fundamental to the CDA competency concept, the responsibilities of field supervision in some situations may be too great for one CDA Trainer to handle. Therefore, it has been proposed that the CDA Trainer have a corps of training supervisors to work with trainees in the field; or, that the director of the child care center where a trainee is placed be trained to do field supervision.

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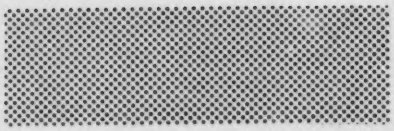

Resource Rooms

Programs which place emphasis on individualized instruction or independent study require a place where materials needed can be easily secured. This room has been labeled the resource room in the Texas Child Development Associate pilot project. The resource room should provide adequate space and a convenient organizational plan to allow trainees to secure quickly materials needed to meet the program objectives. This room should also provide a place for trainees to work individually, or with other trainees. If the resource room is going to meet the needs of working trainees, the room must be opened on a flexible schedule or for the extended day on a regular basis.

The resource room will require staff members on a regular basis to provide individual instruction, assistance in securing materials and reorganization of materials. All staff members who are working in a Child Development Associate program should spend some time in the resource room. Staff members in the resource room might include faculty, field site supervisors, a Child Development Associate trainee, or work-study students. The faculty should find the time spent in the resource room very helpful in seeing the amount of time and effort required of the trainees. Also this time will be beneficial for previewing visual aids and keeping up with professional publications. When several faculty members are working in the program, the time spent in the resource room helps trainees to see that, regardless of the instructor, all staff members are working toward a common goal through the use of the same instructional materials.

Colleges frequently find it difficult to provide a room just for the Child Development Associate trainees because of limited space. This may require the staff to utilize an alternate plan which may not yield the desired outcome. After the program becomes established, perhaps the college will be able to justify a resource room especially for Child Development Associate resources and individualized study. Some alternate plans might include a classroom and resource room combined, a small check out room, individualized learning centers in other departments, a mobile van or the reserve section of the library.

The equipment needed in the resource room will vary as the function of the room varies. However, one will want to consider the following: shelving, tables, work carrels, file cabinets, file boxes, record players, cassette player/recorder, slide projector, film strip projector, laminating machine, paper cutter, tacking iron,

and a bulletin board. A part of the training program should include instructing trainees to use the media hardware. Practice in using the equipment will prove helpful to the trainees in future employment.

Trainers should carefully preview materials available in the fields of child development and early childhood education. Materials selected should provide both printed materials and media software including slides, filmstrips, films and audio tapes. Materials selected should be written at a level which the trainees can understand. Trainees will probably find the materials more helpful if a task is to be completed based on the information obtained from the presentation. Other materials which might be included in the resource room are free materials from various companies, professional journals or magazines, toys and other teaching materials for preschool children, as well as displays or other supplies which can be obtained on a loan basis.

Materials should be organized in a manner which is most helpful to the staff and trainees. One might consider a number coding system which corresponds to the modules in the program or a color coding system which corresponds to groups of modules. If the trainees carry materials into the community for trainees' use, a system of packaging all materials required for each individual module might prove helpful.

The resource room will require organization and adequate management to function for the trainees. Trainees should be required to sign in to provide a record of attendance. A staffing schedule should be posted to enable trainees to know when staff members will be available to provide individualized assistance. Also a check out system and inventory system should be established to provide adequate records.

The Child Development Associate resource room may become a room which various groups in the community as well as other departments might desire to share. Staff members from the field sites might be invited for staff development. The Child Development Specialist with the State Department of Public Welfare, as well as other community programs serving children, might also be invited to utilize the resources.

The Child Development Associate resource room should become a rich place with many materials available to those who desire to enhance the lives of young children. It should be a room with an inviting atmosphere which is conducive to study and sharing. The staff should strive to encourage trainees, other college departments as well as the community agencies serving children to come together in a rich environment to better understand children.

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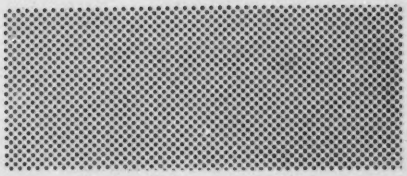
November 1975



An Excerpt from *The CDA Program: The Child Development Associate—A Guide for Training*

(Editor's Note: What follows is taken from a guidebook designed for use in training staff for Head Start, day care, nursery schools and other preschool programs. It is reprinted with the permission of the Office of Child Development, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.)

THE NEED FOR COMPETENT PERSONNEL IN PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

Those who work with young children know that the key element in any program is the staff -- the adults who teach, supervise and relate to the children both individually and in groups. This is true of early childhood programs in Head Start centers, day care centers, nursery schools, or public school settings. The best facilities, materials and curricula, the best intentions of parents, program directors, and teachers cannot guarantee high quality child care or effective educational programs unless those who deal directly with the children are competent, knowledgeable and dedicated.

At present, many individuals who bear primary responsibility for the development and education of young children in child care programs have had insufficient preparation for the vital and complex task that they have undertaken. Most staff members in child care programs have received preparation in essentially one of two ways: they have been college trained (with or without course work in early childhood education and child development) or their training meets no specific standards directly related to providing developmental care of high quality. This lack of relevant standards for staff preparation merits serious concern in light of a growing recognition that a college degree by itself is no guarantee that a person possesses the competencies necessary to foster intellectual, social, physical, and emotional growth in young children.

With the outpouring of public enthusiasm for such programs as Head Start, the interest of state governments and public schools in early childhood programs, and the rising demand for nursery school and day care services, both the availability and the quality of competent staff for such programs have become matters of growing national concern. It was in response to these needs that the Office of Child Development developed the concept of the Child Development Associate.

THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE (CDA)

The Child Development Associates, or CDAs as they are popularly called, will be representatives of a new professional category. CDAs will be child care specialists with the basic competencies to assume primary responsibility for the daily activities of groups of preschool children in center-based programs. Future extensions of the concept can be made for work in other early childhood settings; for example in home-based programs, family day care, or work with handicapped children. In center-based programs, CDAs will not be responsible for overseeing the total program, but will work in settings with differentiated staffing patterns in close contact with more trained and experienced staff members. CDAs should have the assistance of a para-professional aide or staff helper. Eventually it is hoped that each CDA will hold a nationally respected credential certifying professional competency.

FEATURES OF THE CDA PROGRAM

The key feature of the CDA concept is that, unlike the traditional approach to professional training, the credential of the Child Development Associate will be based upon demonstrated competency to assume primary responsibility for a group of young children rather than solely upon courses taken, academic credits earned, or degrees awarded. Credits and degrees will have their place in training programs. However, the awarding of the CDA credential will be based upon careful evaluation of each candidate's demonstrated ability to work effectively with young children.

The CDA program is currently made up of several components or parts. First is a list of competencies which describe what a Child Development Associate should be able to do. The competencies are the foundation for the development of both training and assessment techniques. Second are pilot training projects which are developing innovative training methods to help trainees in the acquisition of the competencies. Third is an assessment system which will assure that CDAs are indeed competent child care staff. Fourth are credentialling systems developed by the Child Development Associate Consortium, a representative consortium of national organizations concerned with child development. The Consortium will work to obtain recognition for CDAs as a professional group who hold a credential that is nationally respected.

CDA COMPETENCIES

Competencies for the Child Development Associates fall into the follow six broad areas that are believed to be necessary for staff working i comprehensive developmental program for preschoolers:

1. Setting up a safe and healthy learning environment;

2. Advancing physical and intellectual competence;

3. Building positive self-concept and individual strength;

4. Organizing and sustaining the positive functioning of children and adults in a group in a learning environment;

5. Bringing about optimal coordination of home and center child rearing practices and expectations; and

6. Carrying out supplementary responsibilities related to the children's programs.

Within each of these categories there are numerous specific skills or competencies which each CDA must acquire. The competencies are stated broadly so that they can be used as a framework for training and staff development that reflects the particular needs and preferences of local programs. (The competencies are based on the assumption that broad guidelines can be formulated without violating the divergent educational views or cultural and ethnic backgrounds of various child care providers. The competencies are presented in full beginning on page 35.)

PILOT TRAINING PROJECTS

In spring of 1973, the Office of Child Development funded twelve pilot training projects to prepare trainees to acquire the CDA competencies. These pilot training projects include both urban and rural communities, different ethnic and racial groups, and bilingual-bicultural programs. The training institutions comprise a broad mix of organizations such as universities, community and junior colleges, Head Start programs, private training organizations, and consortia of early childhood organizations, colleges, and government agencies. In most instances, several groups are cooperating to develop approaches to training for Child Development Associates.

Each pilot training project is somewhat unique in its organizational pattern and approach to training. However, all share the following characteristics:

1. Training is geared toward acquisition of the CDA competencies;

2. Academic and field work are a set of coordinated experiences;

3. A minimum of 50 percent of the trainee's time is spent in supervised field work;

4. Training is individualized according to the strengths and weaknesses of each trainee with respect to the CDA competencies;

5. Flexible scheduling allows each trainee to complete the training within a range of time that varies from several months to two years, depending on the trainee's previous experience, expertise, and aptitude in acquiring the CDA competencies.

Central to the concept of training for the CDA competencies is a careful integration of theoretical preparation in child development and early childhood education with practical, on-the-job experience. At least half of each trainee's time will be spent working with young children in situations in which appropriate staff models and regular feedback promote acquisition of CDA competencies. These field work settings include Head Start programs, nursery schools, day care centers, university laboratory schools, other child development programs, or a combination of several programs -- settings in which the CDA candidate is currently employed or may be employed when training is completed.

The method of integrating "academic" work and"field training" varies among the pilot training projects. Some projects provide theoretical work every day, while others set aside specific days of the week or schedule one-week "minimesters." Some projects introduce the CDA competencies through academic experience and expect acquisition through field experience. Others reverse or combine the process.

The purpose of the pilot projects is to develop training models for use in any organization which proposes to offer CDA training. The pilots will also be involved in field testing systems of assessment for Child Development Associates. As information about training strategies and procedures becomes available from the pilots, it will be disseminated by the Office of Child Development.

THE CDA CONSORTIUM

From the outset of the CDA program, leaders in the field of child development and early childhood education have contributed to the development of the CDA competencies and the basic design of CDA training and credentialling. The Child Development Associate Consortium, a newly - created private, non-profit corporation, is continuing to involve the profession and the public in implementing the CDA concept.

The CDA Consortium was formed in June 1972 and received a grant from the Office of Child Development to initiate its activities. It has the responsibility for developing systems for assessing and credentialling Child Development Associates.

The Consortium is composed of more than thirty national organizations concerned with high quality care for preschool children and the career preparation of child development staff.

A 16-member Board of Directors has policy making responsibility, and a full time staff carries out the complex task of this organization.

The effectiveness of the CDA Consortium will depend on its ability to obtain acceptance of this non-traditional approach to the career preparation of early childhood staff. Prospects for success are enhanced by the growing awareness of the limitations of teacher training and certification based

solely on completion of a specified number of college hours or years. In addition, there is an emerging interest in competency-based training strategies in many fields.

LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF THE CDA PROGRAM

The Office of Child Development initiated the CDA program with two principal long-term goals in mind:

1. Upgrading the quality of Head Start, day care, and other child development programs through improving staff skills. In time, the CDA should have the effect of setting standards for staff responsible for young children; and

2. Increasing the supply of trained child care staff to keep pace with the expected continued expansion of programs for preschool age children.

It is expected that the CDA program will legitimatize field training for child care staff, and will provide whatever additional training is necessary to bring many experienced workers up to a level of competency that warrants the CDA credential. By emphasizing demonstrated competencies rather than length of training or accumulation of course credits, the CDA program will simultaneously promote good training and give recognition to workers in the field who are already fully or partially qualitied but may not have formal preparation.

In considering these goals several long-term strategic issues arise: supply and demand for child development staff, funding sources for CDA training, support from state governments, and support from colleges and universities and other training organizations.

Supply and Demand

Some critics have charged that the CDA project is vulnerable to the same forces that have produced an oversupply of elementary and secondary teachers in recent years. Although there is at present a shortage of trained child care staff, the Office of Child Development is carrying out an in-depth analysis of supply and demand data.

The "teacher-surplus" in elementary and high school grades in recent years has been accompanied by a severe shortage of personnel trained to work with preschool children. In addition, over one-third of the staff of day care centers changes every year. Basic demographic and social trends, including increased participation rates of women in the labor force, have stimulated the dramatic growth in child care over the last decade and are still at work. The number of children of ages one

through six is expected to increase another three million by 1980, to about 28 million. Approximately 45 percent of mothers with children now prefer to work, and the figures are higher among minority and low-income families. Parents are placing higher priority on providing their very young children with the advantages of a good preschool program. These trends indicate a continued demand for competent personnel for child care programs.

Funding Sources

The CDA pilot training projects will provide important information about CDA training. The work of the CDA Consortium will provide information about systems of assessment and credentialling. It is hoped that a large number of training institutions will lend their support to this developmental effort by initiating CDA training their own resources.

The Office of Child Development lacks the resources for funding CDA training on a nationwide scale. The Office of Education and the Department of Labor are the primary sources of training funds. Within the Office of Education, home economics, vocational and adult education, and community college programs are possible sources of funds for Child Development Associate training programs. There has been recent congressional interest in the need for legislation to fund child development personnel training. Legislation that would expand existing programs and provide specific funding authorization for CDA training is currently under consideration. In the final analysis however, large scale implementation of the CDA concept will depend upon training institutions redirecting their own resources around competency-based career preparation strategies for child care staff.

State Government Support

Over a period of time, states can be expected to play a key role in the CDA program. The extent of preschool programs varies greatly from state to state. Stimulated by program development at the federal level, many states have experienced rapid growth in numbers of programs. Other states have not developed extensive programs for a variety of social, economic and political reasons. Encouraging moves toward comprehensive planning for preschool programs have emerged in several states; notably, California, West Virginia, Texas, North Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee. State involvement in licensing and certification of preschool staff remains limited but is a growing trend.

The Education Commission of the States, itself a member of the CDA Consortium, has expressed strong interest in competency-based training for preschool staff. The Texas Office of Early Childhood Development has funded several Texas-based CDA pilot training projects in addition to those funded nationally by the Office of Child Development.

Support from Community Colleges, Colleges and Universities

The positive response of community and junior colleges, four year colleges, universities, and other training institutions to the CDA concept is crucial to its success. For these institutions the CDA program can facilitate such goals as pioneering innovative forms of training; providing community service; facilitating outreach to other community institutions, and state, federal, and professional organizations; developing alternative learning strategies for adults, including persons with limited prior formal education; and developing flexible approaches to granting course credits and degrees.

Providing CDA training can broaden the base of an institution's clientele and help change its traditional role. By relating to Head Start agencies and other community groups desiring CDA training for their classroom staff, an institution becomes more intimately involved with the surrounding community. Training programs for Child Development Associates can give impetus to, or become part of, outreach programs such as university extension, university without walls, credit for life experiences, or external degree programs. The need to restructure curriculum toward students' attainment of the CDA competencies can provide a catalyst for needed change.

As the importance of education and development in the early years of the child's life gains greater recognition, new approaches should be developed to mounting sound programs to meet those needs. Competency-based training and credentialling of child care staff is such an approach. The CDA program is an effort to provide the nation with an adequate number of professional workers competent to guide the growth and development of preschool children in a variety of settings. Hopefully, it will also facilitate the improvement and expansion of child care services throughout the country. The Office of Child Development and the CDA Consortium welcome inquiries about the CDA project. The task to be done is complicated and difficult -- but can be accomplished by the cooperation of all those concerned with the education and care of young children.

THE NATURE OF THE CDA COMPETENCIES

The CDA competencies are the substantive foundation for both training and credentialling of Child Development Associates. The competencies are written in general terms so that each training program can supply the specific behaviors that are most appropriate for a particular program, the needs of trainees and children, and the objectives of parents and staff. They can be used as the foundation for training in both urban and rural settings, in bilingual-bicultural situations, and in programs that serve diverse social, racial, and ethnic groups. The competencies take into account the need for the CDA to be able to individualize the program for each child, to be sensitive to racial, ethnic, and cultural uniqueness, and to recognize special needs in any other area of the child's development that require professional attention.

All competencies relate to the role of the Child Development Associate as it is presently conceived; i.e., a person whose primary responsibility is directing the daily activities of groups of children in center-based preschool programs. For Head Start programs, recent policy directives include handicapped children in regular programs and also offer local programs the option of providing home-based services. The competencies as they are now worded are applicable generally to persons who work with young children, including situations where handicapped children are integrated into regular groups or where home-based activities are part of the program. The competencies are also useful for programs that deal exclusively with handicapped children or are entirely home-based, but they will need additional refinement to be fully applicable.

This relationship between specific competencies and expected role is important. Home visitors in a home-based program concerned with infants as well as older preschool children could be expected to master some, but not all, of the CDA competencies and to acquire other competencies more directly related to their daily tasks. Classroom aides might be expected to acquire or demonstrate certain of the CDA competencies, but not all of them, and not at the same level of mastery as a Child Development Associate. Supervisors, or master teachers in center-based programs would be expected to have a greater theoretical knowledge of child development and early childhood education, and to possess supervisory skills and teaching skills for working effectively with adults. Program or center directors should add managerial and administrative skills to understanding and possession of the CDA competencies.

The competencies overlap. Teaching must be seen as a whole which is more complex than the sum of its parts. It is important to recognize the essential interrelatedness of the competency statements. Helping a child learn to climb can aid physical development, concept development and also foster self-esteem. These are different competency objectives, but a single action will advance both.

ORIGIN OF THE CDA COMPETENCIES

The CDA competencies listed in this chapter were developed by a task force of specialists in early childhood education and child development in cooperation with the Office of Child Development. The competencies have been reviewed by a broad spectrum of groups and individuals under the auspices of the CDA Consortium. They have been adopted by the CDA Consortium Board of Directors as a starting point for the development of assessment and credentialling systems for Child Development Associates. The competencies are seen as evolutionary and will be subject to greater specification and validation as development of both training strategies and assessment procedures continues. Acquisition of the competencies is the goal of both the Office of Child Development funded pilot training programs and Head Start Supplementary Training programs for Head Start classroom staff.

BASIC COMPETENCY AREAS

A comprehensive, developmental program for preschool children is one in which the total design helps children acquire the basic competencies and skills for full development and social participation, while at the same time assuring that the quality of the child's experience is emotionally satisfying, personally meaningful, and provides a basis for future learning.

Within such a child development program the Child Development Associate will be expected to have the knowledge and skills in the following six competency areas.

A. Setting up and Maintaining a Safe and Health Learning Environment

1. Organize space into functional areas recognizable by the children, e.g., block building, library, dramatic play, etc.

2. Maintain a planned arrangement for furniture, equipment and materials, and for large and small motor skills learning, and for play materials that is understandable to the children.

3. Organize the classroom so that it is possible for the children to be appropriately responsible for care of belongings and materials.

4. Arrange the setting to allow for active movement as well as quiet engagement.

5. Take preventive measures against hazards to physical safety.

6. Keep light, air and heat conditions at best possible levels.

7. Establish a planned sequence of active and quiet periods, of balanced indoor and outdoor activities.

8. Provide for flexibility of planned arrangements of space and schedule to adjust to special circumstances and needs of a particular group of children or make use of special educational opportunities.

9. Recognize unusual behavior or symptoms which may indicate a need for health care.

B. Advancing Physical and Intellectual Competence

1. Use the kind of materials, activities and experiences that encourage exploring, experimenting, questioning, that help children fulfill curiosity, gain mastery, and progress toward higher levels of achievement.

2. Recognize and provide for the young child's basic impulses to explore the physical environment; master the problems that require skillful body coordination.

3. Increase knowledge of things in their world by stimulating observation and providing for manipulative-constructive activities.

4. Use a variety of techniques for advancing language comprehension and usage in an atmosphere that encourages free verbal communication among children and between children and adults.

5. Work gradually toward recognition of the symbols for designating words and numbers.

6. Promote cognitive power by stimulating children to organize their experience (as it occurs incidentally or pre-planned for them) in terms of relationships and conceptual dimensions: classes of objects; similarities and differences; comparative size, amount, degree; orientation in time and space; growth and decay; origins; family kinship, causality.

7. Provide varied opportunities for children's active participation, independent choices, experimentation and problem-solving within the context of a structured, organized setting and program.

8. Balance unstructured materials such as paint, clay, blocks with structured materials that require specific procedures and skills; balance the use of techniques that invite exploration and independent discovery with techniques that demonstrate and instruct.

9. Stimulate focused activities: observing, attending, initiating, carrying through, raising questions, searching answers and solutions for the real problems that are encountered and reviewing the outcomes of experience.

10. Support expressive activities by providing a variety of creative art media, and allowing children freedom to symbolize in their own terms without imposition of standards of realistic representation.

11. Utilize, support and develop the play impulse, in its various symbolic and dramatic forms, as an essential component of the program; giving time, space, necessary materials and guidance in accord with its importance for deepening and clarifying thought and feeling in early childhood.

12. Extend children's knowledge, through direct and vicarious experience, of how things work, of what animals and plants need to live, of basic work processes necessary for everyday living.

13. Acquaint children with the people who keep things functioning in their immediate environment.

C. Building Positive Self-concept and Individual Strength

1. Provide an environment of acceptance in which the child can grow toward a sense of positive identity as a boy/girl as a member of his family and ethnic group, as a competent individual with a place in the child community.

2. Give direct, realistic affirmation to the child's advancing skills, growing initiative and responsibility, increasing capacity for adaptation, and emerging interest in cooperation, in terms of the child's actual behavior.

3. Demonstrate acceptance to the child by including his home language functionally in the group setting and helping him to use it as a bridge to another language for the sake of extended communication.

4. Deal with individual differences in children's style and pace of learning and in the social-emotional aspects of their life situations by adjusting the teacher-child relationship to individual needs, by using a variety of teaching methods and by maintaining flexible, progressive expectations.

5. Recognize when behavior reflects emotional conflicts around trust, possession, separation, rivalry, etc., and adapt the program of experiences, teacher-child and child-child relationships so as both to give support and to enlarge the capacity to face these problems realistically.

6. Be able to assess special needs of individual children and call in specialist help where necessary.

7. Keep a balance for the individual child between tasks and experiences from which he can enjoy feelings of mastery and success and those other tasks and experiences which are a suitable and stimulating challenge to him, yet not likely to lead to discouraging failure.

8. Assess levels of accomplishment for the individual child against the background of norms of attainment for a developmental stage, taking into careful consideration his individual strengths and weaknesses and considering opportunities he has or has not had for learning and development.

D. Organizing and Sustaining the Positive Functioning of Children and Adults in a Group in a Learning Environment.

1. Plan the program of activities for the children to include opportunities for playing and working together and sharing experiences and responsibilities with adults in a spirit of enjoyment as well as for the sake of social development.

2. Create an atmosphere through example and attitude where it is natural and acceptable to express feelings, both positive and negative -- love, sympathy, enthusiasm, pain, frustration, loneliness or anger.

3. Establish a reasonable system of limits, rules and regulations to be understood, honored and protected by both children and adults, appropriate to the stage of development.

4. Foster acceptance and appreciation of cultural variety by children and adults as an enrichment of personal experience; develop projects that utilize cultural variation in the family population as resource for the educational program.

E. Bringing About Optimal Coordination of Home and Center Child-rearing Practices and Expectations

1. Incorporate important elements of the cultural backgrounds of the families being served, food, language, music, holidays, etc., into the children's program in order to offer them continuity between home and center settings at this early stage of development.

2. Establish relationships with parents that facilitate the free flow of information about their children's lives inside and outside the center.

3. Communicate and interact with parents toward the goal of understanding and considering the priorities of their values for their children.

4. Perceive each child as a member of his particular family and work with his family to resolve disagreements between the family's life style with children and the center's handling of child behavior and images of good education.

5. Recognize and utilize the strengths and talents of parents as they may contribute to the development of their own children and give parents every possible opportunity to participate and enrich the group program.

F. Carrying Out Supplementary Responsibilities Related to the Children's Programs

1. Make observations on the growth and development of individual children and changes in group behavior, formally or informally, verbally or in writing, and share this information with other staff involved in the program.

2. Engage with other staff in cooperative planning activities such as schedule or program changes indicated as necessary to meet particular needs of a given group of children or incorporation of new knowledge or techniques as these become available in the general field of early childhood education.

3. Be aware of management functions such as ordering of supplies and equipment, scheduling of staff time (helpers, volunteers, parent participants),

monitoring food and transportation services, safeguarding health and safety and transmit needs for efficient functioning to the responsible staff member of consultant.

PERSONAL CAPACITIES ESSENTIAL FOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATES

In addition to the knowledge and experience that are essential components of educational competencies, it is essential that the people who teach young children have specific capacities for relating to them effectively. From field observation of practitioners and a review of the literature, it is possible to name those qualities and capacities which are likely to be most congruent with the competencies as defined. These are essential complements to the more technical aspects of competence. The capacities listed below represent patterns of relatedness most relevant to teaching children in the early years of childhood. Training programs for CDAs should try to develop them in all CDA candidates.

- -To be sensitive to children's feelings and the qualities of young thinking
- -To be ready to listen to children in order to understand their meanings
- -To utilize non-verbal forms and to adapt adult verbal language and style in order to maximize communication with the children
- -To be able to protect orderliness without sacrificing spontaneity and child-like exuberance
- -To be differently perceptive of individuality and make positive use of individual differences within the child group
- -To be able to exercise control without being threatening
- -To be emotionally responsive, taking pleasure in children's successes, and being supportive for their troubles and failures
- -To bring humor and imaginativeness into the group situation
- -To feel committed to maximizing the child's and his family's strengths and potentials

Trainees

CDA training is expected to be appropriate for people of different ages and from a wide variety of backgrounds - experienced workers in early childhood programs, young men and women wanting to enter the child care profession, older women who want to return to work after raising a family.

The CDA pilot projects are choosing a mixture of candidates - employed and unemployed, experienced and inexperienced, from Head Start and from other public and proprietary preschool and day care programs. In selecting trainees from other than Head Start programs, OCD recommends the following three minimum standards. Other selection criteria are left to the discretion of the program managers.

1. Trainees should be selected who reflect the ethnic and racial population they are expected to serve.

2. Trainees should be age 17 or high school graduates.

3. Trainees must meet local health requirements for working with young children.

Institutional Arrangements

CDA training can be sponsored by a variety of institutions or groups of institutions. The following is a partial list of possible training institutions:

1. Regional Training Offices or State Training Offices
2. Human resources commissions
3. Established day care and Head Start centers or other preschool programs.
4. State or local agencies which license and set standards for services to children
5. Neighborhood and community organizations
6. High schools
7. Private organizations (profit or nonprofit)
8. Mental health institutions and/or clinics
9. Vocational technical schools
10. Groups organized for the advancement of ethnic groups
11. High school adult education programs
12. Extension services of colleges
13. Community and Junior colleges
14. Colleges and universities
15. Early childhood education task forces or consortia organized on a statewide or regional basis.

Training institutions are encouraged to work out cooperative arrangements with other organizations; for example, a community college working cooperatively with a day care association, or a regional training consortium working through the extension division of a local college. Some training institutions may see their roles primarily as developing and testing training materials and providing technical assistance; in this case, another group would carry out the actual training. The CDA pilot training projects involve this kind of cooperation among diverse institutions.

Training programs are encouraged to establish a CDA advisory board which represents community groups being served by local early childhood programs. The project director of the training program should take the lead in instituting the local advisory board. Advisory boards should include parents of preschool children and CDA trainees. If existing advisory boards are utilized, they could play a valuable role in helping to develop and review the CDA training plan. The suggested role of the advisory board would be to review the overall training program and suggest improvements. For Head Start Supplementary Training programs, this function may be served by the Head Start Career Development Committee.

OBJECTIVES OF CDA TRAINING

The obvious, if difficult, aim of CDA training is to help trainees incorporate the CDA competencies into their everday behavior and thus become recognized Child Development Associates. This implies a process of professional self-development in which both trainee and trainer are working together to help the trainee master the competencies. In addition to acquiring the competencies, there are four overarching goals which relate to status and advancement in the early childhood education profession. Some training activities will not relate directly to the competencies but instead to these objectives:

1. Acquisition of the CDA Role.

   Helping trainees to develop positive concepts of their own work roles, interrelationships with parents, program directors, medical and social workers, other staff members, and community groups; and to examine the expectations held for them by others.

2. Development of Teaching Style.

   Helping trainees to understand and refine their own interpersonal styles in relating to children, parents, colleagues and others.

3. Acquisition of Teaching Techniques.

   Helping trainees acquire specific techniques and skills in working with children in classrooms and other group settings. (This goal is directly related to acquisition of the CDA competencies.)

4. Socialization into the Profession.

   Helping trainees acquire a broad background in the field of early childhood education and the social issues associated

with programs for young children. Helping trainees acquire a professional self-image, commitment to the field, and a sense of involvement in professional groups and activities.

ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CDA TRAINING

Although each CDA training program is expected to be somewhat unique in its organizational pattern and approach to training, all are expected to share the following characteristics. (These are essentially the same criteria with which Head Start Supplementary Training institutions must comply under the new HSST policy issuance.)

1. Training is based upon acquisition of the CDA competencies. Each component of the training program relates to the development of specific competencies. The entire training program ultimately leads to the attainment of all of the CDA competencies.

2. A minimum of 50 percent of the trainee's total training time is spent in supervised field work.

3. Training is organized so that academic and field work are an integrated set of experiences.

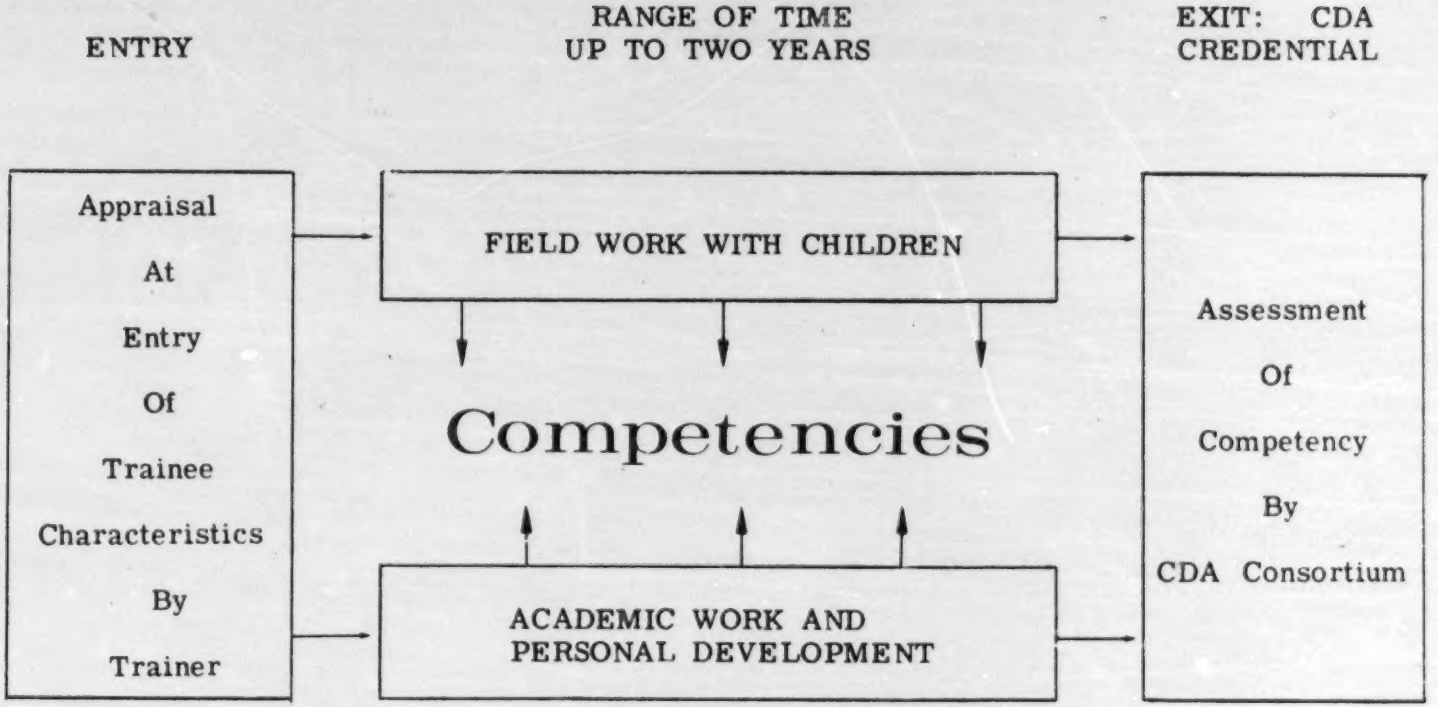
4. Training is individualized according to each trainee's strengths and weaknesses with respect to the CDA competencies. (e.g., Upon entry, a trainee's work with children is evaluated and a plan for training developed that has at least some components that are individualized according to individual trainees' previous experience and expertise. Interim evaluations are made as training progresses, and counseling is provided until both trainee and trainer decide that the trainee has acquired the CDA competencies and is ready to apply for assessment for the CDA credential.)

5. Training is flexibly scheduled so that length of training program depends on each trainee's acquisition of the CDA competencies.

6. Wherever possible, valid credit accompanies CDA training.

The following diagram illustrates the basic pattern of CDA training. The chart which follows it illustrates the major differences between CDA training and traditional forms of training.

CDA TRAINING DIAGRAM



DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CDA TRAINING AND TRADITIONAL TRAINING

		TRADITIONAL TRAINING	CDA TRAINING
1.	Entry	Standards set by college - e.g., entrance examinations, high school diploma.	Open eligibility - 17 years old or high school diploma, and meets local health requirements.
2.	Structure of Academic Course Work	Preplanned for all students. Some individualization as instructors see fit.	Training program individually designed to meet each trainee's needs. Training can be individualized because each trainee is given an initial entry assessment to determine his/her strengths or weaknesses with respect to the competencies.
3.	Relationship of Theory to Practice	Academic work includes child development, teaching methods and general academic breadth requirements; e.g., history, science, sociology. General academic work usually precedes education courses. Field experiences are usually limited in duration.	Academic theory is thoroughly integrated with field experiences. Both academic and field experiences are based upon a specific set of competencies designed for CDAs. These competencies are skills and behaviors required for persons working with young children.
4.	Time	2 - 4 years	Varies according to trainee's progress. Two years is an expected maximum in obtaining the CDA competencies.
5.	Field Experience	Usually includes practice teaching of short duration which follows academic training.	Academic and supervised field work occur simultaneously. Field work comprises at least 50% of training.
6.	Exit	Standards are established by the university, college or community college by completing the academic program with acceptable or satisfactory grade requirements.	Standards are met by successful acquisition of the CDA competencies. Assessment of the acquisition of the competencies is executed by the system developed and administered by the CDA Consortium.
7.	Certification	Degrees, certificates, or credentials awarded to the trainee by the academic institution.	A Child Development Associate credential awarded to the trainee by the CDA Consortium.
8.	Institutions Involved	Colleges, community and junior colleges, and universities.	Colleges, community and junior colleges, and universities - in cooperation with, and in addition to, a wide variety of other organizations interested in training for child care staff.

Settings for Field Placement

Supervised field experiences are crucial for helping trainees acquire the CDA competencies. Office of Child Development guidelines state that 50 percent of the trainees' total training time should be spent in supervised field work in early childhood settings where a trainee can be a responsible member of a child development staff. Settings may include Head Start Child Development Centers, day care centers, laboratory schools connected with colleges or universities or with high schools or vocational/technical schools, kindergartens pre-kindergartens, extended day care programs, nursery schools, or some combination of several of these programs.

When trainees are placed in field settings not under the direct control of the CDA program staff, the following are criteria recommended for selecting settings for field placement.

1. The setting should be a good example of a developmental program for young children.

2. The setting should be staffed by adults who are good models for the trainee to observe and follow.

3. The setting should have at least one staff member who has outstanding capabilities for working with young children and other staff members, and who is willing to help the CDA trainee acquire the CDA competencies. This person should possess the CDA competencies, be knowledgeable about the objectives of CDA training, possess skill in working with trainees, and be willing to assume extra responsibility in working with the trainee and with the CDA project staff. Whenever possible, compensation should be provided - in status, time, or money or a combination of these and other factors. This supporting staff member, members of the CDA project staff, and the trainee should work together to plan on-the-job responsibilities and experiences which will help the CDA trainee acquire the competencies.

4. The setting should provide the trainee with the opportunity to have genuine responsibility as a functioning member of the staff team. He or she should interact with children and parents, participate and assist in the design, implementation and evaluation of the childrens' program, and have other responsibilities appropriate to the particular field placement. The trainee should <u>not</u> be considered as an "extra pair of hands" assigned only to clean-up and non-teaching tasks.

Major field placements should be in group programs for children three to six years of age. Trainees should work in programs enrolling various age groups within this age range in order to acquire knowledge about developmental characteristics and appropriate related teacher behavior. For example, if a trainee's experience has included work in a child care center where he or she was an aide in a two year old group, he or she should have some additional experience with three, four, and five year olds. It is also important that primary field experiences take place in settings similar to those in which a CDA is likely to work after training is completed. If CDA trainees are most likely to be employed in urban preschool programs that serve primarily low-income children, field placement should include some work with groups of children who reflect similar socio-economic, racial, and ethnic characteristics. It would be inappropriate to place trainees only in private nursery school settings serving primarily middle and upper-class families.

It is conceivable that in some instances, the only available placements for field experience may not be ideal examples of developmental programs for young children. There may be staff on site who do not all provide excellent models for the CDA trainee to follow. When a choice is available, trainees should be placed in sites that are best suited for learning competencies. When a trainee is working full time, his or her work setting may necessarily be his primary field placement. In such circumstances, the CDA program staff must find many ways to demonstrate good models of competencies to the trainee using a variety of methods. Use of films, video tapes, written materials, demonstrations by trainers and visits or short placements in demonstration child development centers may be alternatives which will broaden the trainee's knowledge of competent teaching. When possible, the CDA program staff should take the additional responsibility of helping staff in the less-than-optimum settings improve the quality of their program.

Field Supervision by the CDA Program Staff

The process of supervision should focus on the trainee's role in the classroom and promote an in-depth understanding of the complexities of that role. Continuing on-the-job supervision should be the primary strategy for enhancing the trainee's level of competency. A team approach in which the trainee, the CDA program training supervisor, and the staff of the child care agency all participate is likely to be most successful. Such an approach can provide opportunities for immediate feedback, demonstration teaching, non-selfconscious observation, and individualization of training.

The supervisor's role should be one of an instructor, advisor, and facilitator rather than a visiting "authority figure" who observes,

comments, and then leaves without a continuing commitment to improving the situation. The supervisor should have ample time at the field placement to become familiar with all aspects of the program and to develop a trusting relationship with the trainee and staff. A good ratio of supervisor to trainees is 1 to 10, or 1 to 12.

The CDA program training supervisor should sensitively and carefully observe and evaluate the trainee's work with children and regularly provide him or her with useful feedback and supportive help in improving competency. In addition the supervisor/advisor should:

1. Coordinate all aspects of training experiences.

2. Provide on-site training support to the trainee to help integrate the trainee's work experience and academic experiences.

3. Plan formal and informal experiences which contribute to the trainee's total learning.

4. Provide counseling, both professional and personal, according to individual trainees' needs.

Suggested Methods for Field Experiences

The following methods are useful to highlight good models of teaching and help trainees acquire the CDA competencies.

1. Demonstrations by the CDA staff or others, followed by group discussion.

2. On-the-job discussions with other staff and CDA supervisor.

3. Use of audio-visual materials with prepared discussion guides that highlight examples of CDA competencies.

4. Self-analysis, guided by evaluation sheets or criteria supplied by CDA training staff.

5. Use of video tape recorders or audio-tape recorders to tape teaching for self-analysis or peer evaluation.

6. Paired peer observations and evaluation where two trainees work together to learn competencies.

7. Personal journals and dairies.

8. Child study: observing specific behaviors or doing case studies. (In all cases confidentiality of the children's records should be preserved.)

9. Individual conferences with training supervisor, followed by feedback and goal setting related to development of the CDA competencies.

10. Discussion groups or seminars in which "What happened this morning" is related to the CDA competencies, to theoretical knowledge of child growth and development, and to principles of curriculum and instruction.

11. On-site workshops focused on curriculum, teaching methods, parent involvement and other subjects related to CDA competency areas.

12. Field visits to experimental programs, community agencies, and child care programs with different philosophies or physical set ups.

13. Exchange placements with other CDA trainees.

14. Independent projects.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES

Academic experiences should not be seen as separate areas of knowledge to be required and mastered but as essential theoretical underpinnings for helping trainees understand and internalize the CDA competencies. Academic experiences should be directly related to CDA competency areas, or particular competencies, and/or the general goals of CDA training. They should be based upon and integrated with field experiences, and be individualized with respect to each trainee's needs and level of competency. Academic experiences do not necessarily have to take place in formal courses but might involve seminars, independent study, lectures, workshops, correspondence courses, "minicourses," or conferences.

It is generally more helpful to have these sessions in or near the centers where trainees work. For example, if a trainee needs help with curriculum for young children, instruction would be more effective if it were done in the preschool center using available or made-on-the-spot materials. Similarly, a lesson on children's art could use paintings made by the children that day. Community resources might be explored at a nearby playground or the local public library.

Suggested Content of Academic Experiences

To design academic experiences, training staff should start with the CDA competencies and use specific competencies as the basis for generating the academic component of training. Following is an outline of academic content derived from the competencies:

1. Child growth, development, and health.

This area relates to CDA Competency Areas A, B, C, and D, and to the overall goals of helping trainees develop teaching style and acquire teaching techniques.

a. Knowledge of cognitive, social, and emotional stages of development in preschool children.

b. Knowledge of physical growth and changes in preschool children.

c. Methods of developing the trainee's capacity to recognize a child's capabilities and potentials.

d. Methods and techniques which help the trainee learn to take advantage of situations which will enhance the intellectual, emotional, physical and social growth of the child. (e.g., programming, curriculum, teaching methods, teaching style.)

e. Methods which highlight and demonstrate the interrelatedness of all aspects of growth and development.

2. History, philosophies, principles and practices in early childhood education.

This relates to the goals of helping trainees acquire positive concepts of the CDA role and of becoming socialized into the profession.

a. Understanding of the roles of various staff members in preschool programs, and of different staffing patterns.

b. Practical knowledge of past and current theories and practices in early childhood education: philosophies, types of programs and curriculum models.

3. Ethnic Studies.

This relates to CDA Competency Area F.

a. Knowledge of cultural and ethnic factors influencing life styles of children and their parents.

b. Relationship of ethnic and cultural backgrounds of children to appropriate curriculum, materials and teacher behavior in preschool programs.

4. Evaluation Methods.

This relates to CDA Competency Area F. This does not mean that CDAs are expected to be highly competent in administering tests or understanding statistics or research methodology. It refers to practical on-the-job methods of evaluation which will help CDAs design and implement the daily program and meet the needs of individual children.

a. Techniques for evaluating child behavior and development.

b. Techniques for evaluating daily program effectiveness.

Suggested Methods for Academic Experiences.

Aside from academic courses, or in addition to coursework, the following methods may prove useful in designing theoretical experiences for CDA trainees.

1. Courses or lectures arranged from faculty or resource persons on the basis of student interest or demand.

2. Independent study or reading arranged with faculty members.

3. Workshop, seminars, and small group discussions.

4. Use of television for appropriate courses offered on educational or commerical stations, or for locally developed programs shown on closed-circuit systems.

5. Correspondence courses.

6. Programmed instruction, prepared modules, or learning activity packages.

7. Supplementary reading assignments, followed by discussion.

8. Films, videotapes, and filmstrips.

9. Mobile training units brought to the field placement site in a rural area.

WAYS TO ORGANIZE AND INTEGRATE ACADEMIC AND FIELD EXPERIENCES

All academic and field experiences should be systematically planned and coordinated around the acquisition of the competencies described for the CDA. Field experiences should comprise approximately fifty percent of training with academic experiences organized around the field experience. Obviously, there is no one model for training which takes into account the differences in sponsoring agencies, geographic constraints, available facilities, and training staff and resources. The following chart illustrates ways that various sponsoring agencies have proposed to organize the experience for trainees.

EXAMPLES OF PROPOSED TRAINING PROGRAMS

Type of Program	Field Experiences	Academic Experiences	Sponsoring Agencies
Coordinated effort among community organizations	Four months internship plus any additional field work needed to satisfy competency level. 50% of trainees' time spent in field assignments; 25% of time spent in skills workshops in preschool settings. Credit awarded on basis of competencies rather than on specific workshops, or time spent. Trainees employed by sponsoring agencies.	25% of trainees' time spent in academic support courses based on trainees' needs.	Head Start Program, working in conjunction with Public Schools (Follow Through and Title I, ESEA), Model Cities Child Care Unit, Mental Health Association Child Care Unit and a Community College with existing teacher aide and child care programs. The CDA program will be on extension and modification of existing programs.
Program serving a widely diverse six-county area with trainees in both urban and rural settings.	Initial two-day orientation. Every-two-weeks cycle of on-site observation, followed by the setting and recording of specific tasks related to particular competencies. Special field visits outside own work setting. Two-week exchange placement for experience in a different setting, or with different age children. Trainees employed in the agencies who sponsor the training program.	Once-a-week academic sessions on-site in one program of a geographic "cluster" served by single advisor/trainer. Content of sessions derived from specific competency needs discovered from that week's observation of trainees. Special 6 week summer session course for trainees whose jobs permit attendance. Carries 20 credits toward AA or BA.	Child Development Program of Community Organization

Type of Program	Field Experiences	Academic Experiences	Sponsoring Agencies
Training Program for Agency Employees	Trainees are employed in Head Start and Model Cities programs. Most training takes place on-the-job through individualized counseling, small group discussions, and demonstration and guidance from trainers. Trainees work on one competency at a time. Some released time is provided.	Academic experiences are individualized using packaged training models and readings, films, and independent projects. Credit awarded from the community college, with arrangements to transfer to the state university.	State University and Community College, in conjunction with: Head Start Program Head Start Supplementary Training Model Cities Child Care Unit Career Opportunities Program
Program to train a small number of CDA master teachers who will return to their jobs and establish demonstration classes for training other CDAs.	Trainees are employed but have considerable released time. Each trainee develops own training plan using resources provided in field settings, college, and community. Observation and conferences determine progress toward competencies. Master teacher and supervisory skills are added to CDA competencies so that trainees will become trainers for the next group of CDA trainees.	Trainees may choose to take academic courses, or to satisfy knowledge requirements by independent study of books, films, etc. No courses are required. Trainee receives 30 credits upon attainment of competencies.	State College in conjunction with a State Head Start Training Office.
Urban Program	Trainees are employed. Staff exchanges to broaden trainees' experiences (urban/rural, black/white/Spanish-Speaking population, etc.). One-month placement in model demonstration center.	45 hour on-site institutes based on competencies. Also on-site experiences designed to relate academic material to practical experiences. Trainees receive 3 units/training session from an affiliated college.	Private Non-profit Training Organization

SUGGESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALIZING PROGRAMS OF STUDY

Procedures for individualizing programs of study are closely related to evaluating each trainee's strengths and weaknesses with respect to the CDA competencies and modifying the training program to lead to attainment of all of the competencies. Following are some suggestions for accomplishing this:

1. Arrange the competencies in a series of learning activities or experiences. Package them so that trainees can move through the sequence at their own pace, and according to their needs and interests.

2. After the initial appraisal, place trainees in small groups according to their strengths and weaknesses. Provide appropriate instruction in the form of mini-courses or directed field experience. Change the composition of groups as some trainees acquire the particular competencies and are ready to proceed with others.

3. After the initial appraisal, ask trainees to work at their own pace toward one competency at a time, or perhaps several competencies within a single competency area.

4. Have each trainee work with his or her training supervisor to develop an individual plan that specifies the competencies the trainee needs to develop and the projected experiences in which he or she is to participate in order to attain them.

5. Ask each trainee to develop his own plan of study for achieving the CDA competencies. (Provide advisers and potential field placements and experiences.) Allow trainees to acquire academic knowledge through formal course work or through independent study, consultation with resource persons, and/or through studying films, tapes, and written materials.

6. After the initial appraisal, interpret the results to each trainee individually. If appropriate, teach the trainees to use the evaluation instrument themselves (e.g., videotaped or audiotaped segments of teaching; self-evaluation forms.) Outline with each trainee a series of training objectives that differ according to the levels of competency that he or she has reached. Organize training into modules which can be presented as needed. Have each module contain several suggestions as to how training objectives might be reached.

ONGOING ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCY

Assessment should be an ongoing part of the training process. It is especially important that assessment be seen as part of trainee's professional self-development. A learning climate should be established in which assessment and training build on individual trainee's strengths.

Initial Appraisal

At the beginning of training, an initial appraisal of each trainee's demonstrated competencies should be made. Prior training, teaching experience, and other relevant information should be considered. From this initial assessment of a trainee's strengths and weaknesses, an individualized course of study should be designed to lead to the acquisition of CDA competencies. This can be done in the following ways and in other ways, the reader may think of:

1. Individual conferences with each trainee to discuss individual goals, attitudes toward children and teaching, and expectations of CDA training in light of past work experience.

2. Self-assessment by each trainee of strengths and weaknesses in relation to the CDA competencies and to the personal capacities needed by Child Development Associates.

3. Observation of the trainee at work in a preschool setting. (This should be done by an experienced observer several times at different hours of the day. Each observation should be at least one hour in duration.)

4. Assessment of previous academic and preschool work experiences through cumulative records and recommendations, if they are available.

5. Feedback conferences with the trainee to discuss strengths and weaknesses and to develop an individualized plan for training.

Ongoing Assessment

The assessment process should be repeated at intervals until the trainee has acquired all of the CDA competencies, and both the training supervisor and the trainee agree that the trainee is ready to be assessed for receipt of the CDA credential. In addition to the procedures suggested for initial appraisal, ongoing assessment can include the following procedures:

1. Focused Conferences. Using the CDA competency statements as a guide, the supervisor and the trainee can discuss areas of classroom activities in which the trainee feels he has attained competency. A conference focusing on attained strengths

can reinforce trainees, allowing them to assess their progress and encouraging them (after trust has developed) to look at themselves in terms of weaknesses as well as strengths. It can also help them identify and plan with the supervisor an individual training design.

2. Seminars. Trainees with varied experience, background, and competencies can consider classroom problems in relation to the CDA competencies. The objective of such discussion is to promote unselfconscious analysis and problem solving. Those who feel inadequate in one area may be able to contribute to a solution in another area.

3. Video tapes and/or tape recordings. These can be used not only as a tool to assess growth but also as a teaching strategy in which participants analyze, discuss, and question ideas about children, child development, and teaching competency. At first trainees should probably analyze the teaching situation rather than focus on specific adult-child interactions. Gradually, as these discussions become less threatening, the group can learn to evaluate each other objectively in a supportive and reinforcing way.

4. Competency profiles of each trainee. These profiles can include records of observations or relevant discussions, statements of individual goals, self-assessments, individual training plans, etc. The competency profile should be kept with the full knowledge of the trainee and would be used to help implement the individualized training program.

5. Feedback Conferences. In a feedback conference the trainee and supervisor jointly evaluate the trainee's progress, sharing assessment ratings, and other pertinent observations. The trainee's competency profile is a useful record for feedback conferences.

Final Assessment for the CDA Credential.

Systems for assessment and credentialling will be developed by the CDA Consortium. They may include several of the assessment techniques mentioned above. For information concerning prototype assessment instruments and credentialling procedures, contact the CDA Consortium. It has not yet been determined how many trainees can be credentialled. In part, this may be influenced by the demand from trainees and from training institutions.

FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING OF TRAINING TIME

CDA training is expected to be flexibly scheduled so that the length of training time reflects individual trainee's ability to master and demonstrate the competencies. Variables that can influence training time are:

1. Trainees' existing competencies acquired through previous experience by working with children.

2. Trainees' knowledge of early childhood education and child development.

3. Trainees' attitude toward and understanding of young children; and trainees' aptitude to acquire skills and competency.

4. The amount of time spent in training, and the nature of the training program.

Ideally, a program should be designed so that trainees may enter at any time, and leave when they have demonstrated the CDA competencies. Where this is not practical, one way to approximate it is to create training cycles of 2-6 months followed by procedures for exit or recycling. On no account should the length of training time be the same for all trainees, or be dependent upon completion of a specified number of credits or hours of supervised experience. Training time should reflect acquisition of competencies.

The length of training time will vary with an estimated maximum time of approximately two years. When trainers and trainees are in agreement that CDA competencies are acquired - and the prequisite assessment and credentialling procedures have been developed by the CDA Consortium - the trainee may apply to be assessed for the CDA credential and formal status as a Child Development Associate.

Following is an example of one possible training cycle:

Phase 1.

- Organize training program.
- Select trainees.
- Hold individual conferences with trainees.
- Observe trainees and hold initial appraisal conference.
- Work out individualized training design based on the trainees' strengths and weaknesses.

Phase 2.

- Begin CDA training.
- Integrate supervised field work with concurrent academic experiences.

Phase 3.

- Conduct ongoing assessment.

Phase 4.

- Continue supervised field work and academic work based on individual trainees' competency levels.

Phase 5.

- As individual trainees acquire all of the CDA competencies, cycle them out of the training program.
- For trainees who have not acquired all of the competencies, cycle back to phase 2. Vary the academic and field experiences to help trainees develop the specific competencies that they lack.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING

One of the objectives of CDA training is to socialize the trainee into the child care profession. To do this, personal and professional counseling should be helpful. Here are several suggestions:

1. Contact child care institutions and inquire about their needs for access to training opportunities for their staff, their reaction to competency-based training, avenues for upward mobility for staff, etc.
2. Early in the program, provide an orientation to the world of work in child care and early childhood education.
3. Early in the program, provide trainees with opportunities to set personal and career goals.
4. Establish counseling procedures which will allow trainees to raise and discuss issues and concerns relating to the program and their own personal and professional development. This will enable counselors to (a) help individual trainees with problem-solving; (b) make referrals to appropriate sources of help; (c) identify anticipated needs which the training program might address, and (d) identify long-term career development goals. If individual trainees do not possess the capabilities for working with young children, or have extraordinary difficulty in attaining the CDA competencies, the program staff may want to suggest other training programs for which the person may be more suited. Such areas may include teaching older children or adults, or working in other human service areas such as health or social services.
5. Provide follow-up and placement services.

PROVIDING VALID CREDIT

It is expected that CDA training programs that are affiliated with colleges and universities will provide trainees with valid credit applicable to degrees in child development or in early childhood education. Some CDA training will be offered by institutions that are not colleges or universities. It is hoped that they will link up with some college or university to provide credit for trainees. Listed below are ways of granting credit for CDA training:

1. Credit by CDA competency assessment (in catalog terms, credit by examination), with blocks of competencies being translated into course credits. The underlying assumption here is that competency is the primary criteria for credit rather than the specific experiences leading to competency.

2. Credit by completion of courses, with courses defined in terms of the CDA competencies. Both academic work and field experiences can be translated into a specified number of credit units and related to new or existing courses. The format of actual instruction can vary widely from formal coursework to on-site seminars, learning modules, independent study, field trips and observation, etc.

3. Credit by recognition of the CDA credential. Once the CDA is established as a credential, it could be considered as equivalent to an associate degree, or as satisfying the required block of credits for a major in early childhood education or child development. Some academic institutions have already indicated a favorable response to arrangments of this kind.

Transferability is important in establishing systems of credit. CDA training programs should make every effort to insure that credit earned in CDA training is valid; that is, applicable to a degree and transferable to other institutions. Some training programs have proposed to give credit through external degree programs of affiliated colleges. Other programs have arranged for trainees to secure credits upon entry for previous "life experiences" or "significant learning." Still others advocate the "upside down" curriculum, in which a student first completes his or her specialization in early childhood education and child development before taking the broad general education courses required for a bachelor's degree.

SUGGESTIONS FOR REVISING EXISTING CURRICULA TO CONFORM TO CDA TRAINING GUIDELINES

The following outline suggests a very simplified procedure to convert existing early childhood education programs to CDA training programs.

Step 1.

Examine course titles and their academic content in relationship to specific CDA competencies. Note areas of overlap and also areas of omission.

Step 2.

Revise existing courses and develop new ones so that each course, and all courses taken together, fosters development of specific competencies. Make sure that all competencies are included.

Step 3.

Examine the CDA competencies to determine what field experiences would foster the development of specific competencies.

Step 4.

Develop a series of field placements and/or on-the-job experiences which will help trainees acquire specific competencies, and all the competencies in turn.

Step 5.

Create administrative mechanisms to insure that academic work and field training are a set of integrated experiences for trainees. For example, cooperative planning and coordination among academic and field training staff is essential where these roles are separated. Academic instructors should visit field training sites at frequent and regular intervals. Similarly, field supervisors should be familiar with the content of academic materials presented to trainees.

Step 6.

Devise ways to allow flexibility so that trainees can enter and leave training on an individual basis. An academic model that has individualized components is essential for flexible scheduling: independent reading, independent projects, films, videotapes, self-instructional learning models, small group discussions, tutorials. Schedule regular appraisals of competency and ways to plan with trainees for completion of CDA training.

Step 7.

Examine the existing credit-hour structure to find ways to give valid credit for CDA training.

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